"That isn't your home town, Jack," said the counselor. "But if you prefer to pay the additional fare out of your own pocket, that is your business."

The boy named another railroad station. "That's better, Jack," said the counselor. "Here are your discharge papers."

The boy's hands trembled as he asked, "What kind of a paper is this?"

"An honorable discharge, of course, as ordered by the court."

The soldier took the paper, read and reread it, checked the corners for secret marks. The counselor said gravely, "Now listen, Jack. The army has only one kind of honorable discharge. Your papers are as good as mine. You go out of this door, and for the rest of your life you will be an honorably discharged veteran. The army has recognized your services overseas. Everything that happened afterwards has been wiped out. You were a sick man. You are in good health now."

The boy was shaking all over. He was still sick. The counselor explained the GI rights to him. "Whatever happens, the army will back you. You are our boy. . . ."

The strain seemed unbearable for the soldier. He asked, "May I go now?"

"Not yet. There is still another formality. Your severance pay."

"Severance pay? For me?"

"Here is your check. Three hundred dollars."

The soldier turned the check over in his trembling hands. He had neither expected nor understood this "formality." The counselor rose from his chair, came nearer to him, and put his arm on his shoulder. "Remember this, Jack. Your papers are as clean as discharge papers can be. The army has been fair to you. The rest is up to you."

The boy left the cubicle without showing his feelings. I watched the separation procedure in half a dozen other cases and returned home with the realization that the United States Army could be thoughtful and humane.

"THANK YOU, SIR!"

Later, talking with people in France, Germany, Italy, and Japan, I asked about their impressions of our men in the armed forces, especially the GI's. They were impressed by the equipment of our men, mostly by the quality of their uniforms and shoes and the abundance of trucks and jeeps. They noticed that the GI's were not as well drilled as the German soldiers and that there was less rigid stratification among our troops. In many respects, the GI's off duty seemed to be fairly independent of their officers. But what surprised people abroad